

**Salmonid Coalition**  
**Meeting Notes**  
November 2, 2006  
Sonoma County Water Agency  
**Draft Document**

**Item 1: Introductions**

Adina Merenlender, Al Cadd, Al Nelson, Amy Bolten, Amy Mai, Bill Cox, Bill Hearn, Bob Anderson, Brian Johnson, Carolyn Wasem, Charlette Epifanio, Colleen Fernald, David Lewis, David Smith, Glen Wright, Gregg Horton, Jake Mackenzie, Robert Klampft, John Nagle, Marc Kelley, Mike Ban, Mike Martini, Nick Frey, Pete Dayton, Renee Webber, and Robert Weinstock

**Item 2: Status of Urban Subcommittee**

The draft biological opinion for the listed Coho is due in late December or early January. If NOAA is to complete the draft, some changes and cooperation may be required of the urban subcommittee. The process we are engaged in, i.e., the Salmonid Coalition efforts is an education process for all parties. The urban users are learning a great deal about their obligations under the Endangered Species Act.

**Item 3: Status of Ag Subcommittee**

After Dr. Horton has completed his assessment, the Ag subcommittee will commence work on best management practices (BMPs). Those BMPs will likely be incorporated into the *Code of Sustainable Winegrowing*, specific to viticulture activity in Sonoma County or a new Code will emerge that will incorporate some aspects of *Fish Friendly Farming* with the *Code of Sustainable Winegrowing*.

**Item 4. Stream Setbacks**

The Salmonid Coalition will likely create a new subcommittee to address stream setbacks. NOAA sent a letter to Sonoma County Board of Supervisors Board Chairman, Paul Kelley, referencing stream setbacks. There have been conversations with decision makers that the Coalition will complete its process, and any input they would provide regarding setbacks would be driven by biology. A representative from the environmental and/or conservation community will be asked to be a part of this subcommittee.

**Item 5. Update on Watershed Analysis**

NOAA has identified six fundamental habitat factors that need to be assessed relative to the salmonids.

- a) Water Quality: With the exception of the Dry Creek and the main stem of the Russian River, not a great deal of information is available regarding water quality.

- b) Water Quantity: Some information from the State Water Resource Board is available. Their information is for the most part specific to appropriated water rights. The Coalition needs to work collaboratively with landowners in the Alexander, Dry Creek and Knights Valleys to better understand the riparian rights associated with water removal from the streams.
- c) Substrate Sedimentation: Good data exists to assess this factor.
- d) Quality of Riparian Vegetation: Some data is available through California Department of Fish & Game (DFG). However, not sure if enough is available to adequately determine all the setback concerns.
- e) Channel Complexity: Again, there is good data available to assess this factor. Data on quantity of large woody debris and riffle to pool ratio available at DFG.
- f) Artificial Passage Barriers: Good progress has been made with information available. However, ground-truthing needs to occur to verify the existing database.

Dr. Horton has collected existing data regarding these factors. Based upon that data, he will develop criteria for enhancing habitat. He is approximately 2/3 of the way through the data.

Trips to Dry Creek and some in Knights Valley would be beneficial. It would be helpful if some of the landowners walked the streams with Dr. Horton and provide anecdotal historical data and assist with ground-truthing.

The success to date is based largely on the cooperation between NRCS, RCD, DFG and NOAA. The extent of future success will rely on landowner participation.

#### **Item 6. Dr. Merenlender Research and Proposal**

Dr. Adina Merenlender is conducting research on uplands associated with Franz and Maacama Creek. Dr. Merenlender will discuss her findings at a meeting on November 9<sup>th</sup>, 3:30 pm to 5:00 pm. For the last five years research has focused on summer flows. Currently research is being conducted to understand upland tributaries and the potential trade-offs associated with out of stream winter storage and its impact on winter bypass. A spatial model has been developed that tracks flow changes over time. This model incorporates the impacts, or lack of impacts, associated with out of stream storage. Most existing water quantity assessments are aggregates; Dr. Merenlender is attempting to disaggregate the assessment to measure impacts of the storage on specific tributaries.

The data that will be produced by Dr. Merenlender's current proposal to measure stream flows in the Russian River watershed will provide information that will support the objectives of this group.

A paper will be submitted that discusses the impacts of the frost and heat protection on spring and summer flows. The paper will also explore flow changes up and down the system relative to spawning gravel and the influence of appropriated rights on flows. The goal is to reduce water requirements at times of stress and understand how alternatives can help reduce that stress.

#### **Item 7. NRCS Employee**

NRCS and NOAA are working toward bringing another person on board to begin working with landowners. The State Conservationist, Ed Burton, has supported NRCS involvement with the Salmonid Coalition. This position will reside with RCD. NRCS will sign an agreement with RCD, will use existing staff, a field biologist and a conservationist to work with NOAA and landowners to do some ground truthing. The position will hopefully be filled by early December and will assist in:

- 1) Developing and finalizing criteria
- 2) Providing technical support
- 3) Ground truthing and understanding relationship between data and what actually exists
- 4) Prioritizing projects
- 5) Working with industries and individuals to develop best management practices

There is a real understanding that access to private land is something to be treated gently. Access will be organized and coordinated through the RCD. The more landowner participation, the more likely we are to understand what the streams looked like historically.

#### **Item 8. OMB Meeting**

Randy Poole, Bob Anderson, Marc Kelley and Carolyn Wasem met with OMB to discuss potential for funding conservation efforts in the Russian River watershed. The Coalition submitted a request for \$103 million – seeking funding from EQIP, WHIP, Healthy Forest Reserve Program, CRP and Open Rivers Initiative. We are going to continue to work with NOAA staff in Washington, the Department of Agriculture and OMB in an effort to secure some level of funding.

#### **Item 9. TU Meeting**

Marc Kelley and Carolyn Wasem met with Steve Moyer of TU to discuss the progress the Salmonid Coalition is making. He agreed that a watershed assessment and a comprehensive analysis of conservation needs is beneficial prior to spending money.

#### **Item 10. Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ)**

CEQ volunteered to assist in coordinating Federal Agency roles and permitting required for conservation projects.

#### **Item 11. Congressman Mike Thompson**

The Congressman and his Legislative Director, Jonathan Birdsong, continue to demonstrate support for the process and the recovery of salmon. Jonathan attended most of the meetings in Washington with the Coalition representatives.

#### **Item 12. Funding Proposal Discussion**

Project #1: From the Dry Creek Agriculture Water Users perspective they will work with the Agencies to develop irrigation models, and determine how much water is being taken out of the system for agriculture/viticulture purposes. This Association is also willing to work on water conservation measures specific to Dry Creek.

The Agencies are hopeful that the Dry Creek Agriculture Water Users can assist in identifying where projects can occur.

Project #2: Storage facilities to hold recycled water in winter season. Some Coalition members wanted a breakdown on where the matching funds will come from to support this proposal. Jurisdictions have needs for this water. Rohnert Park is reviewing water sources for future needs: one of the sources is treated water. The City of Santa Rosa also has needs for the reclaimed water. The jurisdictions and the SCWA need to prioritize reclaimed water use.

Concerns surrounding reclaimed water and its uses in Alexander Valley surfaced. A meeting to discuss these concerns is scheduled for November 16<sup>th</sup>.

Project #3: Dr. Horton is working on compiling the information to assessing where barrier removal is appropriate. Included in that compilation will be a prioritization ranging from high to low.

#### **Item 13. California Fresh Water Shrimp**

The California fresh water shrimp occurs in the Maacama Creek watershed. This is a federally and state protected species. The Fish & Wildlife Service should participate in any discussions around conservation of this species.

#### **Item 14. Next Steps**

Urban Subcommittee would like more discussions about the obligations and options available for conservation under the ESA. Until they draft BO is available, options may be unclear.